

SAINT AUGUSTINE

CONFESSIONS

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BOOK TEN

Chapter 1



SHALL KNOW THEE,' O Knower of mine, 'I shall know Thee even as I have been known.'¹ Virtue of my soul, go deep into it and make it fit for Thee, that Thou mayest have and possess it 'without spot or wrinkle.'² This is my hope and that is why I speak, and in this 'hope I rejoice,'³ when my joy is sound. As for the other things of this life: the more tears they receive, the less are they deserving of tears; the less tears are shed over them, the more do they deserve tears. 'For behold Thou hast loved truth,'⁴ since 'he who does the truth, comes to the light.'⁵ I desire to do this in my heart, before Thee in confession; and in my writing, before many witnesses.

1 1 Cor. 13.12.

2 Eph. 5.27.

3 Cf. Rom. 12.12.

4 Ps. 50.8.

5 John 3.21.

Chapter 2

(2) Even if, I were unwilling to confess unto Thee, what could be hidden in me from Thee, O Lord, to whose eyes the abyss of human conscience is naked?⁶ I should but hide Thee from myself, not myself from Thee. Now, indeed, that my groaning is a witness that I am displeased with myself, Thou art refulgent, pleasing, lovable and desirable, that I may be ashamed of myself, reject myself and choose Thee, and that I may be pleasing neither to Thee nor myself, except on account of Thee.

Before Thee, then, O Lord, I lie unconcealed, whatever I may be. Yet, I have already said what is the fruit of my confessing to Thee. Nor am I doing it with fleshly words and speech, but with the words of the soul and the clamor of cogitation, which Thy ear doth recognize. For, when I am bad, to confess to Thee is nothing but to be displeased with myself; when I am good, to confess to Thee is simply not to attribute this to myself. For, Thou, O Lord, dost bless the just⁷ man, but first Thou dost rectify him from his impiety.⁸ And so, my confession, O my God, is made silently to Thee in Thy sight, yet not silently. It is silent in relation to noise, but, in the sphere of feeling, it cries aloud. Nor do I say any right thing to men which Thou hast not heard before from me, nor dost Thou hear any such thing from me which Thou hast not previously said to me.

6 Cf. Heb. 4.13.

7 Cf. Ps. 5.13.

8 Cf. Rom. 4.5. For Augustine rectification, or justification, is God's act of making an unworthy man righteous.

Chapter 3

(3) But, what business have I with men that they should hear my confessions, as if they could become the healers 'of all my diseases?'⁹ A race interested in finding out about the other man's life, slothful in amending their own! Why do they seek to hear from me what I am, when they do not wish to hear from Thee what they are? And how do they know whether I am telling the truth when they hear about me from myself, since no one 'among men knows what goes on in a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him?'¹⁰ But, if they hear about themselves from Thee, they cannot say: 'the Lord is lying.' For, what is it to hear about oneself from Thee, but to know oneself? Who, then, can know himself and say: 'It is false,' unless he himself lies? But, because 'charity believes all things,'¹¹ certainly among those whom it makes one, in intimate union with each other, I, also, O Lord, do even confess to Thee in such a way that men may hear, though I cannot prove to them that the things I confess are true. But, they whose ears charity doth open unto me, they believe me.

(4) Do Thou, however, my inner Physician, make clear to me with what profit I am doing these things. For, the confessions of my past evils (which Thou hast 'forgiven and covered up,'¹² so that Thou mightest make me blessed in Thee, changing my soul by faith and Thy Sacrament) may, when they are read and heard, excite the heart so that it will not lie in a torpor of despair and say: 'I cannot,' but will rather wake up in the love of Thy mercy and in the sweetness of Thy grace, whereby every weak man is made strong,¹³ provided he becomes aware through it of his own weakness.

9 Ps. 102.3.

10 Cf. 1 Cor. 2.11.

11 Cf. 1 Cor. 13.7.

12 Cf. Ps. 31.1.

13 Cf. 2 Cor. 12.10.

It is a joy for good men to hear of the past evils of those who are now free from them; not that joy arises from the fact that there are evils, but from the fact that they were, but do not now exist.

With what profit, therefore, O my Lord, to whom my conscience confesses daily, being more secure in the hope of Thy mercy than in its own innocence—with what profit, I ask, do I also confess to men through these writings, in Thy presence, not what I have been, but what I am. Now, the profit of confessing of the past I have observed and noted. Yet, what I now am, right at this very time of my confessions, many people desire to know, both those who know me and those who do not. They have heard something from me or about me, but their ear is not close to my heart, where I am whatever I am. They wish, then, to hear me confessing what I am within myself, where neither eye nor ear nor mind can reach in; they wish this as believers, for how could they know it?¹⁴ Charity, whereby they are good, tells them that I do not lie in confessing about myself, and it, being present in them, believes me.

Chapter 4

(5) But, to what profit do they wish this? Do they desire to join me in giving thanks, when they hear how near I approach Thee through Thy grace, and to pray for me, when they hear how much I am retarded by my own weight? I will reveal myself to such people. For, it is no small profit, O Lord my God, that 'thanks will be given by many on our behalf,'¹⁵ and that Thou shouldst be implored by many for our sake.

14 On the Augustinian distinction between belief and knowledge, cf. *Contra acad.* 3.20.43, and *Augustine's Quest of Wisdom* 119-120.

15 2 Cor. 1.11.

Let the brotherly mind love in me what Thou dost teach to be worthy of love, and lament in me what Thou dost teach to be worthy of lament.

Let the mind doing this be brotherly, not alien, not 'of strange children, whose mouth hath spoken vanity: and their right hand the right hand of iniquity,'¹⁶ but a brotherly one which, approving me, rejoices for me, disapproving me, becomes sad for me, because, whether approving or disapproving me, it loves me. To such people, I will reveal myself. Let them breathe easily over my good deeds, breathe anxiously over my evil ones. My good deeds are Thy arrangements and Thy gifts; my evil ones are my own offenses and Thy judgments. Let them breathe easily over the former and anxiously over the latter, and let hymns and weeping ascend in Thy sight from brotherly hearts, Thy censers.¹⁷ But do Thou, O Lord, delighted with the scent of Thy holy temple, 'have mercy on me according to Thy great mercy'¹⁸ because of Thy Name, and, in no wise forsaking Thy undertakings, bring my imperfections to perfection.

(6) This is the fruit of my confessions, that I should confess, not what kind of man I was, but what kind I am; and this, not only before Thee in hidden rejoicing with trembling,¹⁹ and in hidden grief with hope, but even unto the ears of believers among the sons of men, of the companions of my joy and the colleagues of my mortality, of my fellow citizens and the pilgrims in my company, those who have gone before and those who go after, and those who share my company on the way.²⁰ These are Thy servants, my brethren, whom

16 Ps. 143.7-8.

17 Apoc. 8.3. The imagery suggests that the hearts of charitable men waft incense up to God.

18 Ps. 50.3.

19 Ps. 2.11.

20 That man on earth is but a pilgrim is a familiar theme in patristic literature; cf. 2 Cor. 5.6.

Thou didst desire as Thy sons, my masters, whom Thou didst command me to serve, provided I wish to live with Thee and from Thee. And this Word of Thine would amount to little, if it prescribed to me by words only and did not first lead the way by deeds. I serve these men by words and deeds; I do so 'under Thy wings,'²¹ with every great risk, except for the fact that my soul is protected under Thy wings and my weakness is known to Thee. I am very little, but my Father lives forever and My Protector is adequate for me. For He is the same Being, He who has generated me and who protects me. Thou Thyself art all my goods, Thou omnipotent Being who art with me even before I am with Thee. So, I will reveal myself to such men, the kind whom Thou hast commanded me to serve—showing not what I was, but what I now am, and what I am still. However, 'I do not even judge myself.'²²

Thus, then, may I be heard.

Chapter 5

(7) For it is Thou, O Lord, who dost judge me. Because, though no one 'knows the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him,'²³ there is nevertheless something in a man which even the very spirit of the man does not know which is in him; but Thou, O Lord, knowest all about him, Thou who hast made him. In fact, though I despise myself before Thy sight and consider myself but earth and ashes, yet I do know something about Thee which I do not know about myself. Truly, 'we see now through a mirror in an obscure manner,' not yet 'face to face.'²⁴ And so, as long as I am a wanderer away from Thee, I am more present

²¹ Ps. 35.8.

²² 1 Cor. 4.3.

²³ 1 Cor. 2.11.

²⁴ 1 Cor. 13.12.

to myself than to Thee, and yet I know that Thou canst in no way be affected from without. But, in fact, I do not know what temptations I may be strong enough to resist and what ones I cannot. Yet, there is hope, for Thou 'art faithful, Thou wilt not permit us to be tempted beyond what we can bear, rather Thou wilt also with the temptation provide a way out that we may be able to bear it.'²⁵

Therefore, I will confess what I know of myself and what I do not know of myself, since even what I do know about myself I know by virtue of Thy enlightenment of me, and what I do not know about myself I remain ignorant of, until my 'darkness shall become as the noonday'²⁶ in Thy sight.

Chapter 6

(8) I love Thee, O Lord, not with doubtful but with assured awareness.²⁷ Thou hast pierced my heart with Thy Word and I have loved Thee. The heaven and earth, also, and all things which are in them, see how, on all sides, they tell me to love Thee. Nor do they cease to tell this to all men 'that they may be without excuse.'²⁸ More profoundly, however, 'wilt Thou have mercy on whom Thou wilt have mercy, and wilt Thou show pity, to whom Thou wilt show pity:'²⁹ otherwise, heaven and earth speak Thy praises to the deaf.

But, what do I love, when I love Thee? Not the prettiness of a body, not the gracefulness of temporal rhythm, not the brightness of light (that friend of these eyes), not the sweet

²⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 10.13. Augustine seems to have known several versions of this text; for two variant ones, cf. *Enarr. in ps.* 94.9; and *Enarr. in ps.* 61.20.

²⁶ Isa. 58.10.

²⁷ On this whole passage (Chs. 6-27) describing the soul's search for God, consult Cayré, *Initiation* 173-175.

²⁸ Rom. 1.20.

²⁹ Cf. Rom. 9.15.

melodies of songs in every style, not the fragrance of flowers and ointments and spices, not manna and honey, not limbs which can be grasped in fleshly embraces—these I do not love, when I love my God. Yet, I do love something like a light, a voice, an odor, food, an embrace, when I love my God—the light, voice, odor, food, embrace of my inner man,³⁰ wherein for my soul a light shines, and place does not encompass it, where there is a sound which time does not sweep away, where there is a fragrance which the breeze does not disperse, where there is a flavor which eating does not diminish, and where there is a clinging which satiety does not disentwine. This is what I love, when I love my God.

(9) And what is this?

I asked the earth,³¹ and it answered: 'It is not I.' Whatever things are in it uttered the same confession. I asked the sea, the depths, the creeping things among living animals, and they replied: 'We are not Thy God; look above us.' I asked the airy breezes, and the whole atmosphere with its inhabitants said: 'Anaximenes³² is mistaken; I am not God.' I asked the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars: 'Nor are we the God whom you seek,' they said. And I said to all these things which surround the entryways of my flesh: 'Tell me about my God, since you are not He; tell me something about Him.' With a loud voice, they cried out: 'He made us.'³³ My interrogation

30 For the distinction between *homo exterior* (man as an animated body, looking toward the bodily objects of sense perception, having functions common with those of brute animals) and the *homo interior* (man as a *mens*, exercising spiritual functions like those of the angels), cf. *De Trin.* 12.1.1

31 The step-by-step advance, from things of sense, through the mind, to the Wisdom of the one God, is Neo-Platonic in method; cf. Plotinus, *Ennead.* 5.1.4.

32 Anaximenes (one of the first Greek philosophers, fl. 530 B.C., at Miletus) thought that air, or atmosphere, is the one, original material of all things, and that it is quasi-divine. His theory was probably known to Augustine through Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.26, rather than Plutarch, *De plac. phil.* 1.36, as Gibb-Montgomery (*Conf.* 279) suggest.

33 Ps. 99.3.

was my looking upon them, and their reply was their beauty.

Then, I turned to myself and said: 'Who art thou?' And I answered: 'A man.' Here are the body and soul in me, standing ready to serve me; the one without, the other within. From which of these should I have sought my God, whom I had already sought in the realm of body from earth to sky, as far as I could send out the messenger rays³⁴ of my eyes? But, the better is what is interior. To it, indeed, as to an overseer and judge, all the messengers of the body send back their messages concerning the answers of heaven and earth, and all things in them, which say: 'We are not God,' and: 'He has made us.' The interior man knows these things through the help of the exterior man; I, the interior man knew these things, I, I, the mind through the senses of my body. I asked the whole frame of the world concerning my God and it replied to me: 'I am not He, but He has made me.'

(10) Is not this beauty evident to all whose sense perception is intact? Why does it not speak the same thing to all men? Tiny and large animals see it, but they cannot interrogate it—for reason is not placed above the message-carrying senses in them, as a judge. But, men are able to ask, so that 'they may clearly see the invisible attributes of God, being understood through the things that are made,³⁵ but through love they are made subject to these things and, being thus subjected, are not able to judge.³⁶ These things do not reply to questioners unless these latter are capable of judging. Not that they change their voice, that is, their beautiful appearance,

34 Like many ancient thinkers, particularly in the Platonic tradition, Augustine thought that the eyes are possessed of their own light, which is sent out as rays to touch upon the surfaces of objects of vision. Cf. *Sermo* 277.10.10.

35 Cf. Rom. 1.20.

36 Note the emphasis on the function of judgment. E. Gilson (*Introd. à l'étude de s. Augustin* 124) considers judgment the focal point for the application of the theory of divine illumination in the human soul. Cayré (*Initiation* 234-243) seems to identify illumination with spiritual intuition.

if one being simply sees, while another sees and interrogates, so that it appears one way to the first and another way to the second—but, appearing just the same to both, it is mute to one, while it speaks to the other. Rather, it speaks to all, but the latter understand, for they take in its voice from outside and compare it with the truth within. Now, the truth says to me: 'Thy God is neither sky, nor earth, nor any body.' This, their own nature states. Men see:³⁷ it is a thing with bulk, smaller in its part than its whole. Now, you are better—I am talking to you, my soul—since you activate the bulk of your body, giving it life, which no body confers on a body. God, however, is even for you the Life of life.³⁸

Chapter 7

(11) What, then, do I love, when I love my God? Who is He, above the head of my soul? I shall go up through my soul itself to Him. I shall pass beyond my life-force, whereby I cling to the body and fill its frame with life. I do not find my God by that force, for 'the horse and the mule, who have no understanding,'³⁹ would find it likewise, since it is the same force by which their bodies also live.

There is another force, by which I not only vivify but also sensify⁴⁰ my flesh which the Lord has framed for me, commanding the eye not to hear, the ear not to see, but assigning to the former through which I may see and to the latter

37 *vident*: this, Skutella's reading, was adopted earlier by Knöll and Gibb-Montgomery; De Labriolle and the Benedictine text have *videnti*.

38 See an excellent English version of sections 9-10, and a discussion of this text, in Pegis, 'The Mind of St. Augustine,' *Mediaeval Studies* 6 (1944) 45-46.

39 Ps. 31.9.

40 *sensifico*: possibly first used by Augustine. The English form, 'sensify,' has no dictionary authority, but its meaning is clear (to render capable of sensation) and it brings out the analogy with 'vivify' without the use of a periphrastic construction.

through which I may hear and to the other senses, according to their organs and functions, their proper objects respectively.⁴¹ I, being one mind, do these different things through them. I shall also pass above this force of mine, for the horse and mule have this, too; they also sense through the body.

Chapter 8

(12) So, I shall also pass above this power of my nature, ascending by degrees toward Him who made me, and I come into the fields and broad palaces of memory,⁴² where there are treasures of innumerable images, brought in from all sorts of sense objects. There is stored away whatever we cogitate on, too, either by adding to, or taking away from, or changing in any way the things which sense perception has contacted, and anything else kept or put back there, which forgetfulness has not yet engrossed and buried.

When I am in it, I can request that whatever I wish be brought forward. Some things come forth immediately; others are hunted after for a longer time, yet they are dug out as it were from some more concealed containers; still others rush out in a mob, when something else is sought and looked for, jumping forth in the middle as if to say: 'Would we do, perhaps?' These I drive away from the face of my remembrance with the hand of my heart, until what I want becomes clear and enters into sight from the secret places. Other things come up as they are required, in easy and uninterrupted sequence. The first ones give way to those which follow and, in leaving,

41 Cf. Cicero, *De acad.* 2.10.

42 For a thorough analysis of this passage on memory, cf. G. Söhngen, 'Der Aufbau der augustinischen Gedächtnislehre, Conf. X, 6-27,' *Aurelius Augustinus* (Köln 1930) 385. For other treatments of *memoria*, cf. *De Trin.* 11.11-18; 14:13-16; 15.39-43; *Epist.* 7, *in toto*; *De mus.* 6.4-6.

are stored up to come forth again when I desire it. All of this goes on, when I recite something memorized.

(13) In it, all things are kept distinct and classified. They are carried in, each by its own channel—light, for instance, and all colors and shapes of bodies through the eyes; through the ears all kinds of sounds; all odors through the channel of the nostrils; all flavors through the channel of the mouth; and then, by the sensitivity of the whole body, what is hard or soft, hot or cold, smooth or rough, heavy or light, whether outside or inside the body. All these the great recess of memory, and its indescribably hidden and mysterious chasms, take in, to be called to mind and reviewed, when need arises. All these things go in, each by its own gateway, and are there stored away. The things themselves do not go in, of course, but the images of sensible things are ready, there, for the cogitation which recalls them.

Just how these are fashioned who can say, though it is evident by which senses they are caught up and stored away within? For, even while I dwell in darkness and silence, I can, if I wish, produce colors in my memory, and distinguish between white and black and between any others as I wish. Nor do sounds rush in and disturb the object drawn in through the eyes, when I am considering it; yet, they are there, also, and lie hidden in separation, as it were. I can summon these, too, if it pleases me, and they are present at once; with tongue at rest and silent throat, I can sing as much as I wish. The images of colors, despite the fact that they are present, do not intervene or break in when another store, which has flowed in through the ears, is reviewed. Thus, I can remember at will the other things which have been taken in and piled up through the other senses. I can distinguish the fragrance of lilies from that of violets, while smelling nothing, and I can prefer honey to a decoction of musk, smooth to rough, and not by tasting or touching anything at the time, but by recollecting.

(14) I do this inside, in the immense palace of my memory. In it, sky, earth, and sea are present before me, together with all the things I could perceive in them, except for those which I have forgotten. In it, I even encounter myself⁴³ and I bring myself to mind: what, when and where I did something, and how I felt when I did it. In it are all the things which I remember, either those personally experienced or those taken on faith. Out of the same supply, even, I can take now these, now those likenesses of things (whether those experienced or those derived from experience) and combine them with things of the past, and from these I can even think over future actions,⁴⁴ happenings, and hopes—and all these, again, as if in the present. 'I shall do this or that,' I say within myself in this huge recess of my mind, filled with the images of things so many and so great, and this or that follows in consequence. 'Oh, if this or that could happen!' 'May God prevent this or that!'—I say these things to myself, and, while I say them, the images of all the things I am saying are present from the same storehouse of memory. I could not say anything at all about them, if they were lacking.

(15) Great is this power of memory, exceeding great, O my God, a vast and unlimited inner chamber. Who has plumbed its depths? Yet, this is a power of my mind and it belongs to my nature; I myself do not grasp all that I am. Is, then, the mind too narrow to hold itself, so that the ques-

43 This view, that the human soul is a direct object of knowledge for itself, is one of the cardinal features of Augustinian psychology; cf. B. Romeyer, S. J., *La philosophie chrétienne jusqu'à Descartes* (Paris 1936) 2.146-147.

44 Obviously, Augustine put under *memoria* a large number of functions which St. Thomas attributes to distinct internal senses, and (as will be noted in the ensuing chapters) functions which parallel the retentive *habitus* of the Thomistic sense appetites, will and intellect. Probably the best study yet available of the Augustinian sense functions is W. Ott, 'Des hl. Augustinus Lehre über die Sinneserkenntnis,' *Philos. Jahrbuch* 13 (1900) 45-59; 138-148.

tions arise: Where is this thing which belongs to it, and it cannot grasp? Would it be outside it, and not in it? How, then, does it not grasp it? A mighty wonder rises before me, and on this point astonishment seizes me.

Yet, men go to admire the mountains' peaks, giant waves in the sea, the broad courses of rivers, the vast sweep of the ocean, and the circuits of the stars—and they leave themselves behind! They feel no wonder that I did not see with my eyes all these things when I was talking about them. Yet, I could not have talked of them unless I could see within, in my memory, in their vast expanses, as if I were seeing them externally, the mountains, waves, rivers, and stars which I have seen, and the ocean which I take on faith.⁴⁵ Yet, I did not, by vision, take these things into me, when I saw them with my eyes. They are not themselves with me, but just their images. And I know for each what was impressed on me by each sense of the body.

Chapter 9

(16) These are not the only things which the vast capacity of my memory bears. Here, also, are all those things which have been grasped from the liberal disciplines and which have not yet been forgotten—put aside, as it were, in an inner place which is not a place. Nor do I carry the images of these, but the things themselves.⁴⁶ For, what literature is, what skill in discussion is, how many kinds of questions there are, whatever things like this I know, are present in my mem-

⁴⁵ Augustine had seen the Mediterranean, in crossing from Africa to Rome, but he never saw the ocean.

⁴⁶ Imageless thought, or vision, is another characteristic teaching of Augustine's psychology. Spiritual vision of such objects as the principles of numbering, the virtues, the soul's own acts, the principles of mental judgment, is held to go on without sense imagery. Cf. *De Trin.* 10.10.14; *De Gen. ad. lit.* 12.3.6; 12.10.21.

ory in a special way. I have not left the thing outside and just retained the image—nor has it existed as a sound and then passed away, like a spoken word impressed through the ears, through a vestigial image, by which in recollection it again sounds, as it were, when it is not actually sounding—nor, as an odor, while passing and disappearing on the breezes, affects the sense of smell from which it sends in its image to the memory, for us to recall when remembering—nor, as food, which, of course, causes no taste when already in the stomach, yet is tasted, in a way, in memory—nor, as some object perceived by touching it with the body, which the memory pictures even when it is separated from us. In fact, these things are not introduced into the memory, but their images alone are grasped with marvelous speed, and are put away in wonderful compartments, and come forth in a wondrous way through remembering.

Chapter 10

(17) However, when I hear that there are three kinds of questions—Whether a thing is? What it is? What kind it is?—I keep the images of the sounds by which these words are constituted, of course, and I know that they have passed away through the air, accompanied by noise, and now do not exist. But, the things themselves, which are signified by these sounds, I did not attain by any sense of the body, nor did I see them anywhere else than in my mind; yet, I have stored up in memory, not their image, but the things themselves.

If they can, let them tell me whence these things have come into me. For, I have gone over all the entrances of my flesh and have not found out by which one they came in. Of course, the eyes say: 'If they are colored, we have reported them'; the ears say: 'If they emitted sound, they have been

made known by us'; the nostrils say: 'If they were odorous, they passed through us'; so also the sense of taste says: 'If it is not a matter of taste, do not ask me'; touch says: 'If it has no bodily bulk, I did not touch it; if I did not touch it, I did not make it known.'

From what source, and by what route, did these things enter into my memory? I do not know how. When I learned these things, I did not believe in another man's heart; rather, I recognized them in my own and I approved them as true. I committed them to it as to a repository, from which I could take them out when I desired. Therefore, they were there even before I learned them, but they were not in the memory. Where, then, and why did I know them when they were spoken, saying: 'It is so, it is true,' unless because they were already in memory,⁴⁷ but so far removed, buried in its deeper enclosures, that, unless they had been dug out by something that suggested them, I should perhaps have been unable to think them.

Chapter 11

(18) Therefore, we find that to learn things of this kind—whose images we do not acquire through sensation, but which we discern in themselves within us, without images and as they are—is nothing else than, by cogitation, to make a kind of collation of the haphazard and unarranged contents of memory, and, through one's act of awareness, to command

⁴⁷ Augustine knew the Platonic theory of reminiscence (*Meno* 81D) but had rejected it by the year 389, when (*De magistro* 12.38-40) he replaced any tendency toward innate knowledge, or recollection of experience from a previous 'life,' by introducing the theory of divine illumination. From that point on, Augustine always taught that God teaches man the truth from within his soul: *Ille autem qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus; id est incommutabilis Dei virtus atque sempiterna Sapientia. De mag.* 12.38. Cf. below, 11.3.5.

that they be placed close at hand, as it were, in this same memory, where they formerly lay scattered about and unnoticed, that they may eventually come easily to the attention of a mind already familiar with them.

How many things of this kind my memory holds which are already found out, and, as I say, placed ready at hand, as it were—things which we are said to have learned and to know! If I cease to recall them to mind for even a short period of time, they are again submerged and slip off, as it were, into the more removed recesses, so that they must again be excogitated, as if new, from the same place as before—there is no other place for them—and they must be drawn together [*cogenda*] again, so that they may be known. That is, they must be collected as if from a condition of being dispersed; hence, one speaks of cogitating. For, *cogo* [draw together] and *cogito* [cogitate] are related as are *ago* [do] and *agito* [do constantly] and as *facio* [make] and *factito* [make frequently].⁴⁸ But the mind has made this word its own property, so that what is collated, that is, drawn together, in the mind, but not in any other place, is now properly said to be cogitated.⁴⁹

Chapter 12

(19) Again, memory contains the reasons and innumerable laws of numbers and dimensions, none of which any bodily sense impresses; for, these are neither colored, nor resonant, nor odorous, nor tasty, nor tangible. I have heard the sounds of words by which they are signified when there is a discussion about them, but these sounds are one thing

48 The derivation of *cogito* from *cogo* is from Varro, *Ling. lat.* 6.43; cf. Gibb-Montgomery, *Conf.* 286.25.

49 For the technical meaning of cogitation, cf. above, Bk. 5 n. 16.

and the objects are another. For, the sounds are different in Greek from what they are in Latin, but the things are neither Greek nor Latin, nor do they belong to any kind of language. I have seen the lines of craftsmen—even the thinnest ones, like a strand from a spider's web; but these [mathematical lines] are quite different. They are not the images of those lines which my fleshly eye has reported to me. They are known by whoever recognizes them interiorly, without cogitation about any body whatever. I have perceived, also, the numbers which we reckon in all the bodily senses, but the ones *by which* we do the counting are quite different. They are not images of these, and so, they really exist. Let him laugh at my saying this, the man who does not see them. I shall pity him for laughing at me.⁵⁰

Chapter 13

(20) I hold all these things in memory, and I also remember the way I learned them. I have heard and keep in memory the many things most falsely said against them in arguments. Now, even though they are false, the fact that I remember them is not false. I remember, too, that I distinguished between those truths and these errors which are said in opposition. In one way I see that I am now distinguishing these two things, and in another way I remember that I have often made this distinction when I cogitated on them. Therefore, I both remember that I have often understood these things and, as for the fact that I now perceive and understand them, this I store up in memory, so that afterwards I may remember that I now did understand. And so,

⁵⁰ For a Platonist (and for St. Augustine) the perfect intelligible numbers which the mind can 'see' are far more real than the numbered things in the order of sense objects. Cf. *De ordine* 1.3.6; *De musica* 6.2.2-6.16.

I remember that I remembered, just as later, if I recall that I could now remember these things, I shall certainly recall it through the power of memory.

Chapter 14

(21) The same memory contains also the feelings of my mind, not in the way that the mind itself possesses them, when it undergoes them, but quite differently, in the way that the power of memory is related to itself. For, I can remember having experienced joy, yet not be joyful; I recall my past sorrow, without being sorrowful; I recollect that I formerly was in fear, without present fear; and I have remembrance of former desire, without present desire. Sometimes, on the contrary, I reminisce about my departed sorrow with present joy, and my joy with present sorrow.

There is nothing to be wondered at in this, in regard to the body; the mind is one thing, the body another. Thus, if I remember with joy a past pain of the body, that is not so astonishing; however, this is different with the mind, since the mind is memory itself. Thus, when we give something to be memorized, we say: 'See that you keep this in mind'; and when we forget, we say: 'It was not in my mind' and 'It slipped my mind'—for we call the memory itself, mind.

Since this is so, then, how is it that, when I remember with joy my past sorrow, my mind possesses joy and my memory sorrow? And, when the mind is joyful from the fact that joy is present in it, how is it, then, that the memory is not sorrowful from the fact that sorrow is present in it? Does memory, perhaps, not belong to the mind? Who would claim this?

Without doubt, memory is something like a stomach for the mind; so, joy and sorrow are like sweet and bitter food. When they are committed to memory, conveyed down, as it

were, into the stomach where they come to be stored, they cannot be tasted. It is ridiculous to consider these things similar, yet they are not entirely dissimilar.

(22) But, look, when I say that there are four passions⁵¹ of the mind, I bring forth from memory desire, joy, fear, and sorrow. Whatever I could say in a discussion about them, by dividing each into the species within the genus of each and by defining them, it is in the memory that I find what to say and from there that I bring it forth. However, I do not suffer any of these passions when I take note of them by remembering. Yet, before they were recalled by me and reviewed, they were there. For that reason, it was possible to draw them out of it through remembrance.

It may be, then, that these are produced from memory, in the process of recall, just as food is from the stomach in the process of rumination. But, why is the sweetness of joy, or the bitterness of sorrow, not perceived in the mouth of cogitation by the man engaged in discussion, that is, the man who is reminiscing? Is this the point of dissimilarity, since they surely are not wholly alike? Who would willingly speak of things of this sort, if every time we mention sorrow or fear we were forced to undergo sorrow or fear? Yet, we would not speak of them unless we found in our memory not only the sounds of their names according to images impressed by the senses of the body, but also the notions of the things themselves which we did not receive through any avenue of the flesh. The mind itself, in sensing, through the experience of its own passions, committed them to memory; or, the memory retained them for itself, even though they were not committed to it.

⁵¹ This is the traditional Stoic list of four passions, probably known to Augustine through Cicero, *De finibus* 3.10.35. St. Ambrose introduced a good deal of Stoic thought into Christian moral theory, in his *De officiis* (cf. Bourke, *St. Thomas and the Greek Moralists* [Milwaukee 1947] 13-14; 56-57).

Chapter 15

(23) Whether through images or not, who can easily say? In fact, I can name a stone, I can name the sun, while the things themselves are not present to my senses. Of course, their images are at hand in my memory. I can name bodily pain, and it is not present in me when there is no suffering. Yet, unless its image were present in my memory, I would not know what I am talking about, and I would not distinguish it from pleasure, in a discussion. I can name the health of the body, while I am healthy in my body; the thing itself is indeed present in me. Yet, in fact, unless its image were also present in my memory, I would not recall at all what the sound of this name meant. Nor would sick people know what was said, when health is named, unless the same image were kept by the power of memory, although the thing itself were absent from the body.

I can name the numbers by which we count; see, they are in my memory: not their images, but themselves. I can name the image of the sun and it is present in my memory. I do not recall an image of an image, but simply the image; it is present to me when I remember. I can name the memory and I recognize what I am naming. Where do I recognize it unless in memory itself? Now, could it be present to itself through its own image, and not through itself?

Chapter 16

(24) Now, when I name oblivion, and likewise recognize what I am naming, what would be the source of my recognition if I did not remember it? I am not talking about the sound of the name, but the thing which it signifies. Now, if I had forgotten this meaning, I should not be able at all to

recognize what the sound's function is. Therefore, when I remember my memory, the very memory is present to itself in itself, but, when I remember oblivion, both memory and oblivion are present—memory, as that from which I recall; oblivion, as that which I recall. But, what is oblivion except the privation of memory?⁵² How, then, can it be present, so that I may remember it, when I cannot remember while it is present? But, if we keep in memory what we remember, and if, without remembering oblivion, we could not possibly know the meaning of this word when we heard it, then oblivion is retained in memory. Therefore, it is present so that we will not forget, and, when it is present, we do forget.

Or, is one to understand from this that it is not present in memory through itself, when we remember it, but rather through its image—because, if oblivion were present in itself, would not the result be that we would forget, not that we would remember? Now, who will eventually work this out? Who will understand how it is?

(25) Certainly, O Lord, I am working hard on it, and my work is being done on myself; I have become unto myself a soil of difficulty, and of too much sweat.⁵³ For, we are not now gazing curiously at the sky's expanses,⁵⁴ nor are we measuring the distances between the stars, nor are we trying to weigh the earth; I am the one who is remembering, I am the mind. It is not so astonishing if whatever I am not is far distant from me, but what is nearer to me than myself? And,

⁵² Augustine's difficulty with oblivion is, at least partly, due to ambiguity in the use of memory and its privative term, oblivion. He does not clearly distinguish the capacity to remember from the act of remembering, nor complete oblivion (total amnesia) from the forgetfulness of one item of knowledge.

⁵³ Cf. Gen. 3.17-19.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ennius' lines: 'No one considers what lies before his feet; they search the broad expanses of the sky.' (These lines are quoted by Cicero. *De divin.* 2.13.30). For a parallel in thought, cf. Aristotle, *De partibus animalium* 1.5: 644b31-645a4.

notice, the power of my memory is not understood by me, yet, at the same time, I cannot speak of myself without it. What should I say, when it is a certitude to me that I do remember oblivion? Or, should I say that what I remember is not in my memory? Or, should I say that oblivion is in my memory just for this—that I may not forget? Both are most absurd.

What of a third possibility? On what basis may I say that the image of oblivion is kept in my memory, not oblivion itself, when I do remember it? On what basis, too, may I say this, since, when any image of a thing is impressed on memory, it is first necessary for the thing itself to be present, from which the image can be impressed? For, thus do I remember Carthage; thus, all the places where I have been; thus, the faces of the men I have seen and the things reported by the other senses; thus, the health of the body itself or its pain. When these things were at hand, my memory took the images from them, which, as being present, I might see directly and review in my mind when I remembered the things in their absence.

If, then, oblivion is held in memory through its image and not through itself, it must certainly have been present itself, in order that its image might be grasped. Now, when it was present, how did it write its image in the memory, when oblivion erases, by its presence, even what it finds already known? Yet, I am certain that I do remember in some manner or other, though this manner be incomprehensible and inexplicable, even oblivion itself, whereby the object we remember is consigned to destruction.

Chapter 17

(26) Great is the power of memory; its deep and boundless multiplicity is something fearful, O my God! And this is

the mind,⁵⁵ and I am this myself. What, then, am I, O my God? What is my nature? A life of many aspects and many ways, strikingly immeasurable.

Look into the fields, hollows, and innumerable caverns of my memory, filled beyond number with innumerable kinds of things, either by means of images as in the case of all bodies, or by means of their own presence as in the case of the arts, or by means of some sort of notions or impressions as in the case of the feelings of the mind (which the memory keeps even when the mind is not undergoing them, though whatever is in the memory is in the mind!). I run through all these things, and I flit here and there. I even go as deep as I can, yet there is no limit. So great is the power of memory, so great is the power of life in man who lives mortally!

What shall I do, Thou true Life of mine, O my God? I shall pass over even this power of mine which is called memory; I shall pass over it to reach Thee, sweet Light. What dost Thou say to me? Behold, going up through my mind to Thee, who dwellest above me, I shall even pass over this power of mine which is called memory, desiring to attain Thee where Thou canst be attained, and to cleave to Thee where it is possible to be in contact with Thee.

For, even beasts and birds have memory; otherwise, they could not find their lairs⁵⁶ and nests, or the many other things to which they become accustomed. And they could not grow accustomed to any thing, unless through memory. Therefore, I shall even pass over memory to attain Him who has set me apart from the four-footed beasts and made me 'wiser than the fowls of the air.'⁵⁷ I shall even pass over memory,

55 For Augustine, *memoria* is not a faculty of the soul, but the whole soul, as conscious of itself and contents; memory even includes the subconscious presence of anything to the soul, and, thus, God is always in memory. Cf. *De Trin.* 14.6.8-11.14; cf. Gilson, *Introduction* (1943) 134-135.

56 Cf. Vergil, *Georg.* 3.316.

57 Job. 35.11.

so that I may find Thee—where, O truly good and serene Sweetness—where shall I find Thee? But, if I find Thee without memory, I am without remembrance of Thee. And how, indeed, may I find Thee, if I am without remembrance of Thee?⁵⁸

Chapter 18

(27) The woman who had lost her drachma and looked for it with a lamp⁵⁹ would not have found it, unless she retained some remembrance of it. For, when it had been found, how would she know whether it was the one, if she retained no remembrance of it? I remember many lost things which I have looked for and found. From this, I know that, when I was looking for one of them, and people would say to me: 'Perhaps this is it? Maybe this one?' I would continue to say: 'It is not,' until the thing I was seeking was shown to me. Unless I had some remembrance of it, whatever it was, I should not have found it, even if it were shown to me, for I should not have recognized it. That is always the way it is, when we look for some lost thing and find it. Yet, of course, when by chance something is lost from sight, not from memory—any visible body, for example—its image is retained within, and it is sought until it comes back within view. And, when it is found, it is recognized from the image which is within. We do not say that we have found what we lost, if we do not recognize it, and we cannot recognize it, if we do not remember it. It disappeared, indeed, from before our eyes, but it was retained in memory.

⁵⁸ In *Meno* 80D, Plato had asked how one could look for anything absolutely new, implying that, were it not present in some way in memory, it could not be recognized when found.

⁵⁹ Cf. Luke 15.8.

Chapter 19

(28) What? When the memory itself loses something, as happens when we forget and try to remember, pray, where do we look for it, unless in the memory itself? And in it, if one thing is presented in place of another, we reject it until, the thing we are looking for turns up. When it does turn up, we say: 'This is it.' We would not say that unless we recognized it, and we would not recognize it unless we remembered. Yet, we certainly had forgotten it.

Or, had it disappeared, not completely, but only in part? And is the other part sought, by means of that which is retained, because the memory felt that its object of consideration was not as complete as usual, and, feeling the defect in a habit which was, as it were, defective in some part, it strove to get back what was missing?

For instance, if a man who is known comes before our eyes or into our thoughts, and we are trying to recall his name, which we have forgotten, then, any other name which occurs fails to be connected, because it has not been customary for our thought of him to go along with it; hence, it is rejected until that name occurs which our customary way of thinking of the man accepts as not inappropriate. And, from what source does it occur, if not from memory itself? For, when we recognize it, on being reminded by someone else, it is from there that it comes. So, we do not accept it as something new, but, in recalling it, we judge that what has been said is the right name. But, if it is entirely wiped out of mind, then we do not remember even when reminded. And, if we even remember that we have forgotten it, then we have not yet completely forgotten. Therefore, we would not be able to look for something that has been lost, if we had altogether forgotten it.

Chapter 20

(29) Now, how do I look for Thee, O Lord? When I look for Thee, my God, I am looking for the happy life.⁶⁰ May I seek Thee, so that my soul may live.⁶¹ For, my body has life from my soul, and my soul has life from Thee. How, then, do I seek the happy life? It is not mine, until I can say: 'Enough, there it is.' Here, then, I ought to say how I do look for it, whether through remembrance, as though I had forgotten it and I still retained the fact that I had forgotten, or through a desire to learn it as something unknown, either something I never knew, or which I have so forgotten that I have no remembrance even that I have forgotten it. Surely, the happy life is this: what all men desire and [such that] there is absolutely no one who does not desire it? Where did they know it, this object which they desire in such a way? Where did they see it, to love it so? Certainly, we do possess it, but how I know not.

There is one certain way whereby each man, when he possesses this object, is then happy, and there also are those who are happy in hope. The latter possess it in an inferior way, compared to those who are already really happy, yet they are better off than those others who are happy neither in reality nor in hope. Still, unless this third kind of people possessed it, in some way, they would not desire to be happy; that they have such a desire is most certain. Somehow or other they came to know it, and so they possess it in some kind or other of knowledge. My problem concerning this is whether it may be in the memory; for, if it is there, then we were at one time happy, either all individually, or all

60 The universal search for a happy life is a common theme among classic writers Augustine's *De beata vita* (translated by L. Schopp in this series [New York 1948]) is, of course his early treatment of the topic.

61 Isa. 55.3.

in that man⁶² who was the first to sin, in whom also we all died,⁶³ from whom we are all born amidst unhappiness. I do not ask this question now,⁶⁴ but I do ask whether the happy life is in the memory.

Now, we would not love it, unless we knew it. We hear this word and we all admit that we seek this thing, for we are not delighted merely by the sound. When a Greek hears this word in Latin, he is not delighted, for he does not know what has been said. Yet, we Latins are delighted, as he is, too, if he hears it in Greek, for the thing itself it neither Greek nor Latin, this thing which Greeks and Latins and men of every tongue yearn to obtain. So, it is known to all men who, if they could be asked whether they desire to be happy, would reply in one voice, without any hesitation, that they do.⁶⁵ This would be impossible, unless the thing itself, of which this is the name, were kept in their memory.

Chapter 21

(30) Now, is this the same as the case of the man who, having seen Carthage,⁶⁶ remembers it? No! The happy life is not seen with the eyes, since it is not a body.

Is it like the example of our remembering numbers? No! One who possesses these in knowledge⁶⁷ does not seek to obtain further, but we possess the happy life in knowledge, and so we love it, yet wish to attain it further so that we may *be* happy.

⁶² Adam.

⁶³ Cf. 1 Cor. 15.22.

⁶⁴ Cf. *De civ. Dei* 19.4.

⁶⁵ Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. Nicom.* 1.4: 1095a15; a text which Augustine did not know at first hand, but he would be acquainted with the Aristotelian position through Cicero, *De finibus* 5.5. Cf., also, Augustine, *Serm.* 150.3.4.

⁶⁶ Cf. above, 10.16.25.

⁶⁷ *notitia*: translated as 'knowledge.'

Is it like the instance where we remember the art of oratory? No! For, though, when this word has been heard, people recall to mind the thing itself, even those who are not yet eloquent—and many do desire to be (whence it is apparent that eloquence exists in their knowledge), but, on the other hand, they have observed through the senses of the body that other people are eloquent and they are delighted and long to be likewise; they would not be delighted except from interior knowledge and they would not desire to be likewise unless they were so delighted. However, we do not have personal experience of the happy life in other people, through any sense of the body.⁶⁸

Is it like the way in which we remember joy? Perhaps so. For, I remember my joy even when sad, just as I do the happy life when I am unhappy, and I have never seen, or heard, or smelled, or tasted, or touched my joy by any sense of the body, but I have experienced it in my mind when I have been joyful. Its knowledge stuck in my memory, so that I am able to remember it, sometimes with contempt, sometimes with longing, depending on the difference between the things from which my joy came, as I remember it. For, I have been imbued with a certain joy arising from shameful things, and, as I now recall this, I feel disgust and curse it; at other times, it arises from good and virtuous things, and I recall it with longing, even though, perhaps, they are no longer available, and therefore I am saddened as I recall my former joy.

(31) Where, then, and when did I experience my happy life that I should now remember, love, and desire it? Not just I alone, or in the company of a few people, but absolutely all people want to be happy. Unless we knew it with certain

⁶⁸ A notoriously difficult sentence in Latin: those interested in its structure should consult De Labriolle, *Conf.* 2.264; Gibb-Montgomery, *Conf.* 297.

knowledge, we would not will it with such a certain act of will. But, how is this? If the question be asked of two men whether they wish to serve in the army, it is quite possible that one of them may reply that he wants to, the other that he does not. But, if they are asked whether they wish to be happy, both will say at once and without any hesitation that they do desire it. Nor is there any different reason why one wishes to enter military service and the other does not, than that they wish to be happy. One man, perhaps, finds his joy in one thing, another man in another? Even so, they agree that they all wish to be happy, just as they would agree, if asked the question, that they wish to possess joy. This joy they call the happy life. Even though one man attains it here, another there, still it is but one thing which all men strive to reach, so that they may be joyful. Now, since this is a thing which no man can deny experiencing, it is therefore recognized as found in the memory, when the name, happy life, is heard.

Chapter 22

(32) Far be it, O Lord, far be it from the heart of Thy servant who is confessing to Thee, far be it that I should consider myself happy by virtue of just any joy which I experience. For, there is a joy which is not given to the wicked,⁶⁹ but rather to them who serve Thee for Thine own sake; for such people, Thou Thyself art Joy. And this is the happy life, to rejoice unto Thee, from Thee, on account of Thee: this it is and there is none other.⁷⁰ They who think that there is another pursue a different joy, and not the true one. Yet, their will is not turned away from some representation of joy.

⁶⁹ Cf. Isa. 48.22.

⁷⁰ Cf. *De civ. Dei* 8.9.

Chapter 23

(33) Is it, then, uncertain that all men wish to be happy, because those who do not wish to find their joy in Thee—and this is the only happy life—do not, in point of fact, desire the happy life? Or, do all desire this, but, because 'the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh . . . so that they do not do what they wish,'⁷¹ they descend to that of which they are capable and are content with it, for they do not desire that for which they have insufficient capacity, to the extent that their desire would render them capable of it?

Now, I ask all men whether they would prefer to get their joy from truth rather than from falsity? They will hesitate a little to say that they prefer it from truth as they hesitate in saying that they wish to be happy. Indeed, the happy life is joy arising from truth. For, this is the joy coming from Thee, who art the Truth,⁷² O God; Thou art 'my light,'⁷³ the salvation of my countenance, O my God.⁷⁴ This happy life all men desire; this life, which alone is happy, all men desire; the joy arising from truth all men desire.

I have been acquainted with many men who wished to deceive, but not one who wished to be deceived.⁷⁵ Where, then, did they get their knowledge of this happy life, unless where they got their knowledge of truth, too? For they love the latter, also, since they do not wish to be deceived. And, when they love the happy life, which is nothing other than joy arising from truth, they certainly love truth, also. Nor

⁷¹ Gal. 5.17.

⁷² John 14.6.

⁷³ Ps. 26.1.

⁷⁴ Ps. 41.12.

⁷⁵ On Augustine's theory of error, cf. *Enchiridion* 5.17 (trans. by B. M. Peebles in this series [New York 1947], pp. 381-383); cf. L. W. Keeler, S. J., 'St. Augustine on the Problem of Error,' *Thought*, 8 (1933) 410ff.; reprinted as one chapter in *The Problem of Error from Plato to Kant* (Roma [Gregorianum] 1934).

would they love it, unless some knowledge of it were in their memory.

Why, then, do they not take their joy from it? Why are they not happy? Because they are more keenly concerned with other things⁷⁶ which have greater power to make them unhappy than this, which they faintly remember, to make them happy. 'Yet a little while the light is'⁷⁷ in men; let them walk, walk, lest darkness overtake them.

(34) But, why does 'truth engender hatred'⁷⁸ and Thy man who speaks the truth has become a enemy to them,⁷⁹ when a happy life is loved and it is nothing but joy arising from truth? Is it that truth is so loved that, whoever love something else, they wish this object of love to be the truth, and, since they did not want to be deceived, they do not want to be shown that they have been deceived? Therefore, they hate the truth because of the same thing which they love in place of truth. They love truth when it enlightens; they hate it when it reproves.⁸⁰ Since they not wish to be deceived, and they do wish to deceive, they love it when it reveals its own self, and they hate it when it reveals themselves. Its retribution upon them stems from this: they who do not wish to be revealed by it, it both reveals against their will and is not itself revealed to them.

Thus, thus, even thus is the human mind, even thus is it blind and weak; it wishes to lie hidden, a foul and unattractive thing, but does not wish anything to be hidden to it. What befalls it is the contrary: it is not hidden before the truth, but the truth is hidden before it. Nevertheless, even while it is in such unhappiness, it prefers to rejoice in true things rather than in false. It will be happy, then, if, with

76 Cf. *De lib. arb.* 1.14.30.

77 John 12.35.

78 A proverb taken from Terence: *Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit* (*Andria* 68).

79 John 8.40.

80 Cf. John 3.20.

no hindrance interposed, it will come to rejoice in that through which all things are true, in the only Truth.

Chapter 24

(35) See how much I have travel'd about in the spaciousness of my memory while looking for Thee, O Lord, and I have not found Thee outside it. Nor have I found anything about Thee which I did not keep in memory, ever since I learned of Thee. For, from the time that I learned of Thee, I did not forget Thee. Now, wherever I found truth, there did I find my God, Truth Itself, and from the time that I learned of the Truth, I have not forgotten. Therefore, from the time that I learned about Thee, Thou dost dwell in my memory, and there do I find Thee when I remember Thee and delight in Thee. These are my holy delights which Thou hast given me in Thy mercy, having regard to my poverty.

Chapter 25

(36) But, where dost Thou dwell in my memory, O Lord; where dost Thou dwell there? What resting place hast Thou fashioned for Thyself? What sanctuary hast Thou built for Thyself? Thou hast granted this favor to my memory, to dwell in it, but in which part of it Thou dost dwell, this I now consider. When I recalled Thee to mind, I went above those parts of it which the beasts also possess, for I did not find Thee there among the images of bodily things. So, I came to the parts of it in which I keep my mental feelings, but I did not find Thee there. So, I entered into the seat of my very mind, and there is one for it in my memory, since the mind also remembers itself, and Thou wert not there. Because,

just as Thou art not a bodily image, nor the feeling of a living being, such as occurs when we are joyful, sorrowful, longing, fearful, mindful, forgetful, or anything else of this kind, so, too, Thou art not the mind itself. For, Thou art the Lord God of the mind, and all these things are mutable, but Thou dwellest as an immutable Being above them all. So, Thou hast deigned to reside in my memory, from the time that I have learned about Thee.

And why do I look for the place in it where Thou dost dwell, as if there really were places in it? What is certain is that Thou dwellest in it, for I remember Thee from the time that I have learned about Thee, and I do find Thee in it when I recall Thee to mind.

Chapter 26

(37) Where, then, did I find Thee in order to learn about Thee? For, Thou wert not already in my memory before I learned of Thee. Where, then, did I find Thee in order to learn about Thee, unless in Thyself above me?⁸¹ Yet, there is no place. We go backward and we go forward,⁸² yet there is no place. O Truth, Thou dost preside over all things, even those which can take counsel with Thee, and Thou dost answer in the same time all who consult Thee, however diverse their questions. Thou dost answer clearly, but all do not hear clearly. All seek counsel concerning what they wish, but they do not always hear what they wish. He serves Thee best who does not so much expect to hear⁸³ the thing

81 This is the conclusion of the famous demonstration of the existence of God, *De lib. arb.* 2.15.39: 'nor should there be any doubt about it now: the Immutable Nature, which is above the rational soul, is God'; cf. *De vera relig.* 31.57.

82 Cf. Job 23.8.

83 Cf. Hab. 2.1.

from Thee which he himself desires, but rather to desire what he hears from Thee.

Chapter 27

(38) Late have I loved Thee,⁸⁴ O Beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved Thee! And behold, Thou wert within and I was without. I was looking for Thee out there, and I threw myself, deformed as I was, upon those well-formed things which Thou hast made. Thou wert with me, yet I was not with Thee. These things held me far from Thee, things which would not have existed had they not been in Thee. Thou didst call and cry out and burst in upon my deafness; Thou didst shine forth and glow and drive away my blindness; Thou didst send forth Thy fragrance, and I drew in my breath, and now I pant for Thee; I have tasted, and now I hunger and thirst; Thou didst touch me, and I was inflamed with desire for Thy peace.

Chapter 28

(39) When I shall cleave to Thee with all my being, sorrow and toil will no longer exist for me, and my life will be alive, being wholly filled with Thee. At the present time, however, because Thou dost lift up whomever Thou fillest and I am not filled with Thee, I am a burden to myself. My joys, which are to be lamented, struggle against my sorrows, which are cause for joy, and I know not on which side victory may stand.

⁸⁴ This lyric passage is often quoted and is one of the best known texts in the *Confessions*.